

(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11)

2 165 747 A

(43) Application published 23 Apr 1986

(21) Application No 8525710

(22) Date of filing 18 Oct 1985

(30) Priority data

(31) 34065 (32) 24 Oct 1984 (33) IT

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(51) INT CL<sup>4</sup>  
A47B 96/18

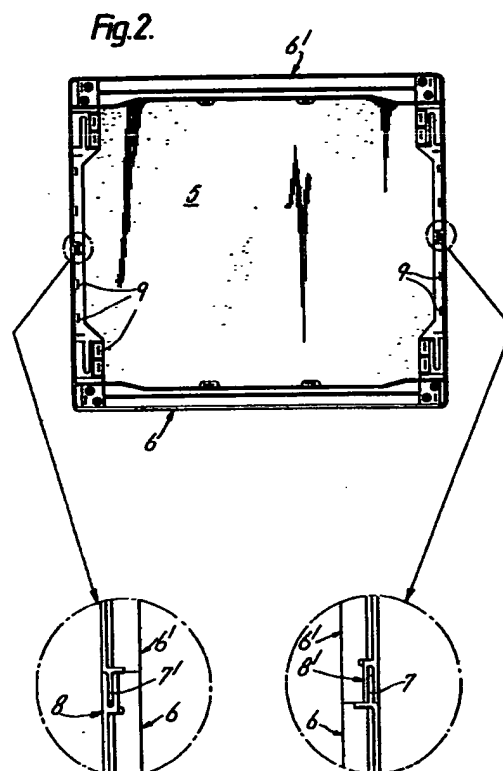
(52) Domestic classification  
A4L 119 302 303 AAD  
U1S 1226 1238 1966 A4L

(56) Documents cited  
GB A 2124483 GB 0768491

(58) Field of search  
A4L A4H

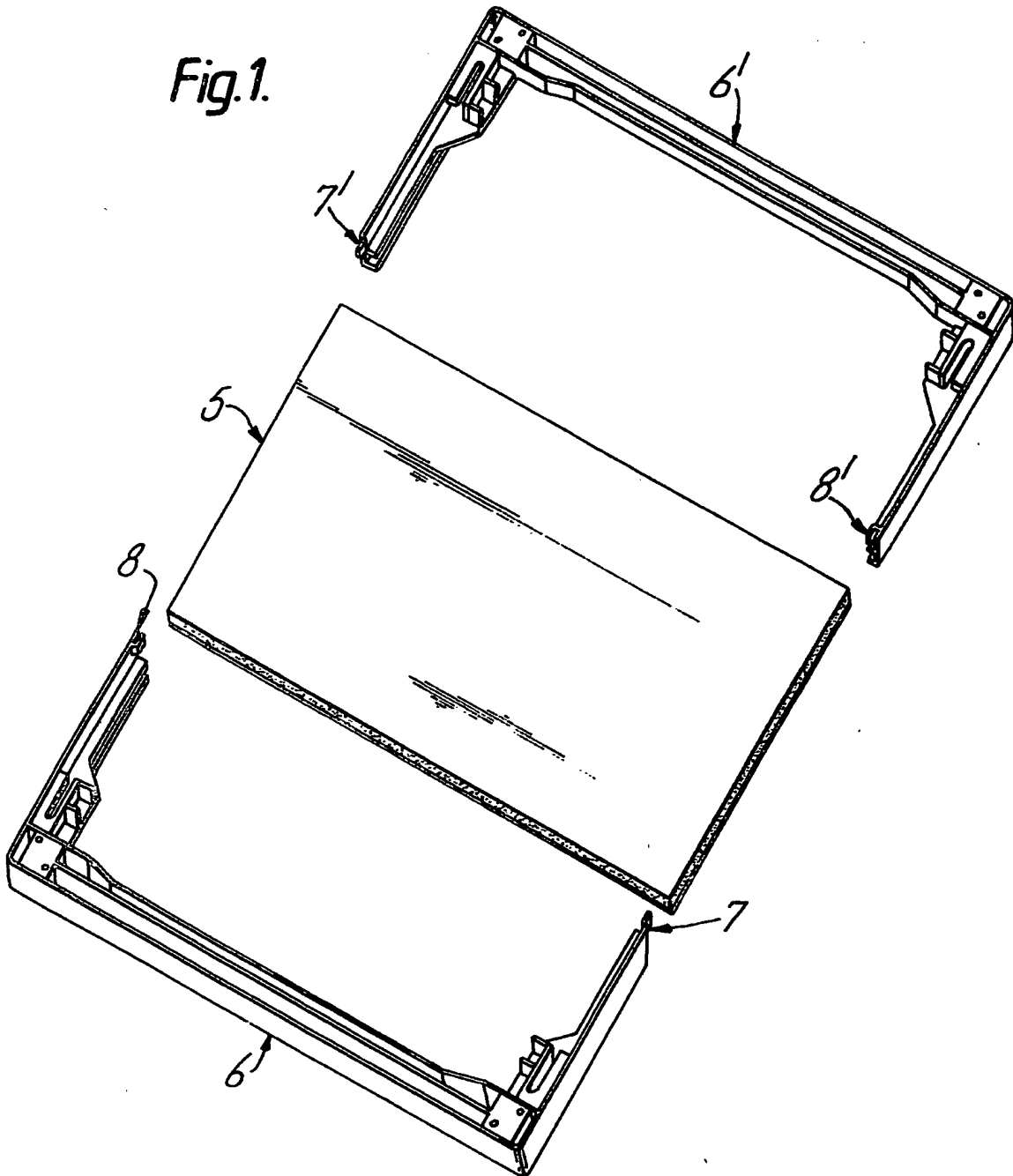
(54) Work top arrangement for domestic electrical appliances

(57) A work top arrangement for domestic electrical appliances is formed by a rigid panel (5) of chipboard covered with plastics material and enclosed by a frame of injection-moulded thermoplastic material. The frame is formed by two substantially square C-shaped elements (6, 6') provided with ends (7, 7'; 8, 8') which can be respectively coupled with sliding insertion, said panel (5) being fixed to the lower edge of the two frame elements (6, 6') by stapling clinching means (9). Each of the two frame elements (6, 6') is provided at one end with a tongue portion (7 and 7' respectively) and at the other end with a guide (8, 8' respectively), said tongue portions and said guides being respectively positioned and dimensioned in such a way as to provide for a coupling effect with sliding insertion in order to join the two frame elements (6, 6').



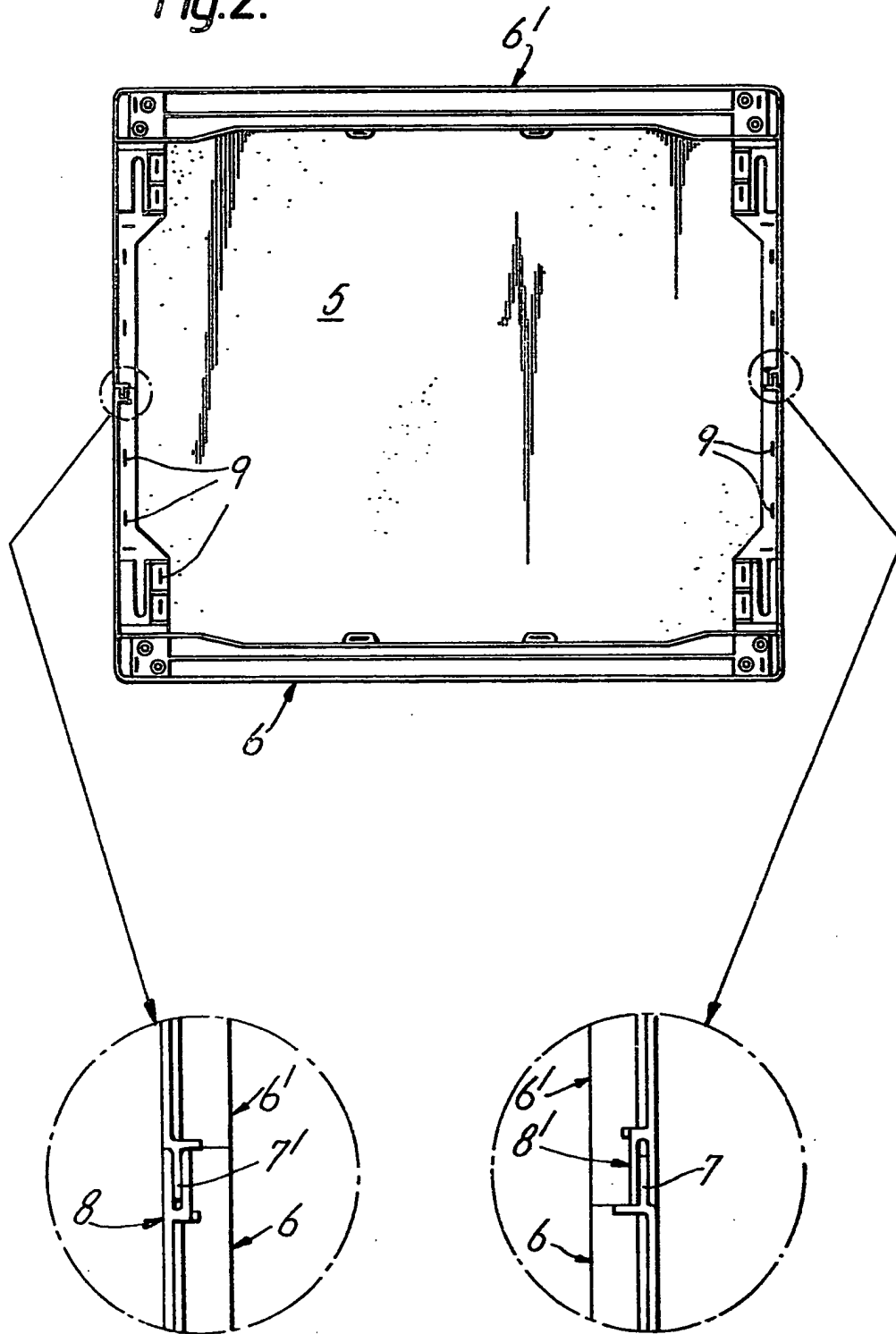
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Fig. 1.



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Fig. 2.



## SPECIFICATION

### Work top arrangement for domestic electrical appliances

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The invention relates to a work top arrangement for forming the top surface of domestic electrical appliances, for example clothes washing machines, dish washing machines and refrigerators.

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Work top arrangements are known, which are formed by a panel of rigid material (generally chipboard covered with a layer of plastics material) fitted into a peripheral frame or trim (of metal or plastics material).

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The peripheral frames may be produced by extrusion or by injection moulding and, to permit the panel to be fitted therein, they are open at one side (generally the rear side) which is subsequently closed by a further frame element.

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Alternatively, the frames are formed by a single flexible shaped member which is bent around the edges of the panel, after which the ends may be suitably connected together (usually with joints).

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Those types of work top arrangements suffer from a number of substantial disadvantages.

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First of all, they give rise to a certain amount of difficulty in regard to mounting the panel and in regard to ensuring correct closure of the edges of the frame of the panel. In addition, they require suitable connecting elements for connecting the various components, which involves complicated and expensive working operations.

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According to the invention, there is provided a work top arrangement for domestic electrical appliances formed by a rigid panel of chipboard covered with plastics material and enclosed by a frame of injection-moulded thermoplastic material, the frame being formed by two substantially square-C-shaped elements provided with ends which can be respectively coupled with sliding insertion, said panel being fixed to the lower edge of the two frame

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As will become apparent from the following description the illustrated embodiment of the invention provides a work top arrangement which is simple and economic and which is formed by a limited number of components which permit rapid assembly and substantial dimensional adaptability.

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The features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description given by way of non-limiting example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

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Figure 1 is a exploded perspective view from below of the work top arrangement, and

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Figure 2 is a view from below of the assembled work top arrangement shown in Figure 1, with the details of the coupling between two frame elements on an enlarged scale.

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The work top arrangement according to the invention is formed by a panel 5 of chipboard, which is covered at least on its top surface by a layer of plastics material which is resistant to mechanical and chemical actions (for example melamine or phenolic resins), and two frame elements 6, 6' made of injection-moulded thermoplastic material (such as polystyrene or ABS).

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The frame elements 6 and 6' are substantially square C-shaped and the two ends thereof have respective configurations which can be connected by a coupling of male-female type. For that purpose, one end of each shaped member 6 and 6' is provided with a tongue portion 7 (and 7' respectively) which can be inserted into a guide 8' (and 8 respectively) at the oppositely disposed end of the other shaped member.

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It will be appreciated that the shaped frame members 6 and 6' may be of various sections, with strengthening ribs and seats for the elements for fixing the work top to the upper edge of the domestic electrical appliance; such details are not described herein as they are commonly known and present in work top arrangements which have been produced hitherto.

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Another feature of the work top arrangement is however represented by the fact that the panel 5, after having been enclosed by the shaped frame elements 6 and 6', is simply fixed to the lower edges of the latter by stapling or clinching means 9 (Figure 2). That assembly configuration is extremely simple and convenient, also because it can permit complete automation of the process for the production of the work top arrangements, with a consequential reduction in times and costs involved. In the more widespread situation in which the work top arrangement has a square surface, the construction according to the invention has the further advantage that it is possible to adopt a single shaped frame element, insofar as the shaped elements 6 and 6' are precisely identical, with a substantial saving in moulding costs and times.

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Moreover, the work top arrangements with the structural features according to the invention are advantageous even when work top arrangements of different sizes are to be produced. Indeed, work top arrangements may be required which are of greater depth and which also have the rearward edge extended and possibly fitted with a grill, to form a spacer element which also bears against the wall of the surroundings.

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In those cases, while the arrangement requires two shaped elements 6 and 6' of mutually different dimensions, the system for connecting the shaped members together and the system for fixing the panel to the shaped members by means of stapling still have the same purposes in accordance with the present invention, with the advantages already described above.

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### CLAIMS

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1. A work top arrangement for domestic electrical appliances formed by a rigid panel of chipboard covered with plastics material and enclosed by a frame of injection-moulded thermoplastic material, the frame being formed by two substantially square-C-shaped elements provided with ends which can be respectively coupled with sliding insertion, said panel being fixed to the lower edge of the two frame elements by stapling means or clinching means.

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2. A work top arrangement according to claim 1 wherein each of the two frame elements is provided at one end with a tongue portion and at the other end with a guide, said tongue portions and said guides being respectively positioned and dimensioned in

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such a way as to provide for a coupling effect with sliding insertion in order to join the two frame elements.

3. A work top arrangement substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

4. A domestic appliance fitted with a work top arrangement according to claim 1, 2 or 3.

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Printed in the United Kingdom for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 8818935,  
4/86 18996. Published at the Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings,  
London WC2A 1AY, from which copies may be obtained.